



*Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Kentucky
Amul R. Thapar*

Somerset Man Pleads Guilty to Drug & Gun Charges **Changed Plea to Guilty After United States Presented its Evidence**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LONDON, Ky. — Juan Francisco Lopez, 20, of Somerset, Ky., pleaded guilty on Friday in United States District Court in London before Judge Danny C. Reeves, after being indicted in October of last year on drug and gun charges.

The guilty plea came after the United States presented its evidence against Lopez during his jury trial.

Lopez was pulled over on Sept. 27, 2006 in Rockcastle County by a Kentucky State Trooper for speeding. According to court records, a search of Lopez's car turned up 62 grams of crack cocaine and a loaded .40 caliber Glock pistol, both found underneath the driver's seat.

Lopez faces a minimum of 15 years to life in prison, a fine of \$ 4 million and supervised release of at least five years. He is scheduled to be sentenced on April 16, 2007.

Amul R. Thapar, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, Richard Putnam, Resident Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (Lexington Field Division), Robert L. Corso, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, John (Jack) Adams, Commissioner, Kentucky State Police, and Eddy F. Montgomery, Commonwealth Attorney for the 28th Judicial Circuit, jointly made the announcement after Lopez entered his plea.

The investigation preceding the jury trial and guilty plea was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Drug Enforcement Administration and Kentucky State Police. This case was prosecuted pursuant to *Project Safe Neighborhood. The United States was represented at trial by Assistant United States Attorney Gregory A. Ousley.

**Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun violence by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing them with additional tools necessary to be successful. It seeks to achieve heightened coordination among federal, state, and local law enforcement, with an emphasis on tactical intelligence gathering, more aggressive prosecutions, and enhanced accountability through performance measures.*

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